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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

Programme budget implications of the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption by the Second Committee in its report (A/50/618/Add.1)

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. At its 43rd meeting, on 12 December 1995, the Second Committee recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21", as contained in its report (A/50/618/Add.1). At the time of adoption of the draft resolution, the Second Committee was provided with a statement of programme budget implications (A/C.2/50/L.82).

2. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 3 and 12 to 15 of the draft resolution the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide to convene the spe ial session envisaged in resolution 47/190 for a duration of one week during the month of June 1997 at the highest possible level of participation (para. 1);

(b) Invite the Commission to devote its Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group meeting, to be held in February 1997, to assisting the Commission in undertaking the review for the special session (para. 3);

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(c) Invite Governments to assist the developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, in participating fully and effectively in the special session and its preparatory process, and in that regard invite them to make appropriate contributions to the Trust Fund to Support the Work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (para. 12);

(d) Request the Secretary-General to prepare, for the consideration of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session, a comprehensive report containing an overall assessment of the progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels, and in the implementation of related outcomes, as well as recommendations for future actions and priorities, and request that the report include:

(i) Concise reports containing an assessment of the progress achieved in specific sectoral and cross-sectoral areas;

(ii) Country profiles providing a concise presentation of progress made and constraints encountered in implementing Agenda 21 at the national level, compiled on the basis of national information received and in close cooperation with the Governments concerned;

(iii) Major and emerging trends and issues within the framework of Agenda 21 and related outcomes of the Conference in the area of sustainable development, including the environmental impact of activities that are gravely hazardous to the environment, taking into account the views of States;

(iv) Recommendations on the future role of the Commission in the follow-up to the outcome of the Conference and related outcomes, building on experience gained since 1992 (para. 13);

(e) Request the Secretary-General to mount a public information programme to raise global awareness of both the special session to review the implementation of Agenda 21 and the work undertaken by the United Nations in the follow-up to the Conference (para. 14);

(f) Decide that the preparations for the special session and the special session itself should be kept within the agreed appropriation level for the biennium 1996-1997 (para. 15).

I. DESCRIPTION OF ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES RESULTING FROM THE DRAFT RESOLUTION

3. The substantive activities proposed in the draft resolution fall under programme 46, Sustainable development, of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as revised, and are covered in part under section 7A, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

4. With regard to operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, the holding of the special session would require that the costs of travel but not the subsistence of one representative from the least developed countries attending the special session be met from the regular budget in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986. These costs are estimated at $119,200. In this connection, it is understood that the Trust Fund referred to in operative paragraph 12 of the draft resolution could be used for payment of a daily subsistence allowance to the aforementioned representative from each least developed country attending the special session, in line with the practice applied under the terms of section XII of Assembly resolution 45/248 A of 21 December 1990, with respect to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Subject to the Trust Fund's having sufficient resources, travel and subsistence expenses would also be paid to one representative each of other developing countries at their request.

5. A provision of $6,200 would be required for official functions of the President of the General Assembly during the special session.

6. In accordance with established practice, the requirements estimated in paragraphs 4 and 5 above ($125,400) would be budgeted under section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

7. The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat would provide information coverage of the special session, which would include production of an information kit highlighting the progress achieved in implementation of Agenda 21 and the issues to be discussed at the special session, radio programmes covering the issues under review, public information outreach and other promotional activities. These activities would be implemented from within the resources of the Department envisaged under section 25, Public information, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

8. With regard to operative paragraph 13 of the draft resolution, it should be noted that the comprehensive report containing an overall assessment of the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 has initially been programmed under the programme entitled "Sustainable development" of section 7A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 for submission to the special session without the country profiles component. It has now been estimated that a two-page country profile would need to be prepared for each country in order to meet this new requirement. The cost of these activities would be absorbed from the resources proposed for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for 1996-1997. In addition, a specialized report on extrapolation of trends involving interlinkages between sectoral and cross-sectoral issues of sustainability would be prepared for submission to the special session. No adequate expertise within the Secretariat and the specialized agencies is available for preparation of that report. It is estimated that 12 work/months of consultancy services totalling $72,000 would be required for this purpose.

9. The activities referred to in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution in relation to the convening of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group of the Commission on Sustainable Development would be accommodated from

within the level of resources proposed for policy-making organs under section 7A, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

10. The conference-servicing requirements for the special session have been estimated as amounting to $825,600, on a full-cost basis. These requirements will be dealt with within the overall provision for the conference-servicing of United Nations meetings and conferences reserved within the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. The actual conference-servicing costs of the session will be reported to the General Assembly within the context of the budget performance report for the biennium 1996-1997.

II. PROPOSALS FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

11. The following additional activities will have to be programmed within the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997:

Section 7A. Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

2. Sustainable development

Programme A.
Sustainable development

Activities

2. Parliamentary services

(a) Parliamentary documentation

(ii) Specialized report on extrapolation of trends involving interlinkage between sectoral and cross-sectoral issues of sustainability; country profiles on progress made and constraints encountered in implementing Agenda 21 at the national level.

12. The resource requirements estimated in paragraphs 4-8 above would amount to $197,400. They represent additional requirements not provided for in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

13. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Furthermore, each statement of programme budget implications and each proposal for revised estimates should contain alternatives to the financing from the contingency fund of the proposed new activities.

14. With regard to the additional requirements of $197,400, it was not possible to identify the activities within the above programmes that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium to finance the costs of the activities under the draft resolution.

III. SUMMARY

15. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.78, the additional activities listed in paragraph 11 above would be programmed under section 7A, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

16. Subject to the guidelines for use and operation of the contingency fund, an additional appropriation in the amount of $197,400 for 1996-1997 would be required, broken down as follows:

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Section 1	125 400
Section 7A	72 000
Total	197 400

17. With regard to operative paragraph 15 of the draft resolution, in which the General Assembly would decide that the preparation of the special session and the special session itself should be kept within the agreed appropriation level for the biennium 1996-1997, the Second Committee has been informed that the additional requirement of $197,400 cannot be absorbed and must stand, and that the need for this requirement would be brought to the attention of the Fifth Committee in accordance with its terms of reference and the provisions of section VI of resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters. The attention of the Second Committee has also been drawn to the fact that in the same resolution the Assembly expressed its concern at the tendency of its substantive committees to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters, and that the Secretary-General had been invited to provide all intergovernmental bodies with the required information regarding procedures for administrative and budgetary matters.